

REMARKS

This response addresses the Office Action mailed September 29, 2003.

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 5, 12, and 13 were indicated to be allowable.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indicated allowability of these claims.

Claim rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

In the Office Action, Applicant's Claim 4 was rejected as indefinite because the terminology "*the characteristic is time and distance*" was indicated to be unclear. This response includes an amendment of Claim 4 to address this rejection.

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

In the Office Action, Applicant's Claims 1-4, 7-11 and 14 were rejected as anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,034,626 ("Maekawa") and Applicant's Claim 6 was rejected as obvious over Maekawa.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections of Claims 1-4, 6-11 and 14.

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Claims 1-4, 6-11 and 14.

Applicant's independent Claim 1 relates to a method for calculating an optimal route. Applicant's Claim 1 includes the step of "*determining a trial route*" from a "*first location*" to a "*second location*" using a "*geographic database*" and using a "*relatively fast algorithm*" optimized for a "*specific criterion*" of a "*characteristic*." Then, Applicant's Claim 1 includes the step of "*determining a boundary value*" for the "*characteristic*" where the "*boundary value*" is that "*value*" by which the "*characteristic*" of the "*trial route*" meets the "*criterion*." Lastly, Applicant's Claim 1 includes the step of "*selecting as the optimal route*" the one that has an "*optimal value for the characteristic*" from "*all possible routes*" between the "*first location*" and the "*second location*" that have a "*value*" for the "*characteristic*" that is "*less than the boundary value*."

Maekawa relates to a navigation system that has a feature for helping a driver reach a destination after the driver has deviated from following a previously calculated route (Maekawa: column 1, lines 51-55). According to Maekawa, when a vehicle has deviated from a previously calculated route, two new routes to the destination are calculated: one that takes into account the direction of travel of the vehicle and another that does not take into account the direction of travel of the vehicle (Maekawa: column 2, lines 10-17). These two routes are compared and one of them is selected (Maekawa: column 1, lines 17-19).

Maekawa does not anticipate Applicant's Claim 1 because Maekawa does not disclose the step of "*determining a trial route*" from a "*first location*" to a "*second location*" using a "*geographic database*" using a "*relatively fast algorithm*" optimized for a "*specific criterion*" of a "*characteristic*" and then "*selecting as the optimal route*" the one has an "*optimal value for the characteristic*" from "*all possible routes*" between the "*first location*" and the "*second location*" that have a "*value*" for the "*characteristic*" that is "*less than the boundary value.*" Maekawa merely compares two routes that were calculated the same way except that one gives preference for the traveling direction of the vehicle and the other does not. Maekawa does not disclose use of a "*relatively fast algorithm*" to determine a "*boundary value.*" Furthermore, Maekawa does not select as an "*optimal route*" that route from "*all possible routes*" that has a "*value*" for the "*characteristic*" that is "*less than the boundary value.*" At least for this reason, Applicant's Claim 1 is not anticipated by Maekawa.

Applicant's independent Claims 7 and 11 are allowable for at least the same reasons as explained in connection with Claim 1.

Applicant's dependent Claims 2-4, 6, 8-10 and 14 are allowable because they depend on base claims that are allowable, as explained above. Further, these claims include additional features or limitations that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Maekawa.

Ser. No. 10/026,503

Response and Amendment "A" dated March 1, 2004

Reply to Office Action dated September 29, 2003

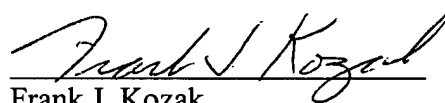
Extension of time

Included with this response are a petition for an extension of time to respond to the Office Action dated September 29, 2003 and an authorization for payment of the fee associated therewith.

Conclusion

Applicant submits that this response addresses all the issues in the Office Action dated September 29, 2003. Therefore, the present application is in condition for allowance. If any issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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